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ABSTRACT

This bibliography presents annotations of 14 publications concerned with the general topic of middle schools. The selections are intended to give practicing educators easy access to the most significant and useful information about middle schools that is available through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system. All of the publications described here were selected from the ERIC catalogs "Resources in Education" (RIE) and "Current Index to Journals in Education" (CIJE). Information on how to order copies of all the publications through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service is also included. (JG)

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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give the practicing educator easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

Materials were selected for inclusion from the ERIC catalogs *Resources in Education (RIE)* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*.

This bibliography was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the Association of California School Administrators.

The Changing Middle School

Ball, Frederick W. "The Sixth Grade: Elementary or Middle School?" ***IAR Research Bulletin,*** 13, 3 (April 1973), pp. 3, 14-17. EJ 078 632.

The purpose of this study was to determine "whether the elementary or the middle school is more effective in educating sixth grade students" and to ascertain differences between elementary and middle schools. These two types of schools were measured according to four basic variables: "Styles of educational activity" (teaching techniques such as small-group and laboratory work), percentage of nonwhite students per class, the adjusted gross income per student, and the percentage of rural schools.

While the results were inconclusive in some of these areas, the study did reveal that as the number of nonwhite students in middle school classes increased, the scores on a measure indicating the quality of educational process also increased. The opposite was true for the elementary schools studied. The study also indicated that as the adjusted gross income per student went up in middle schools, so did the quality of the educational process. Rural middle schools tended to produce higher scores on the Indicators of Quality measure than did rural elementary schools.

Although this study was only a pilot effort, it does represent the kind of research necessary to give educators a clear picture of the merits of middle school education relative to the more traditional forms of education.

Bobroff, John L.; Howard, Joan G.; and Howard, Alvin W. "The Principalship: Junior High and Middle School." ***NASSP Bulletin,*** 58, 381 (April 1974), pp. 54-61. EJ 094 000.

A paucity of training and preparation, as well as experience, characterizes the sample of 233 junior high and middle school principals polled in this survey. These principals were selected randomly from schools in seven states, and the authors clearly imply that they are representative of the whole country.

The majority of this sample of principals has never taught in a junior high or middle school. Although some of these principals had previously served as junior high assistant principals, many of them had never held administrative positions directly related to the junior high or middle school. Many came from elementary or senior high schools.

Even though the majority of these principals indicated an interest in adolescents, most of them believed themselves to be poorly prepared to cope with adolescents' problems. Even those who had had more extensive training said that college professors need to be more in touch with, and up-to-date on, what actually goes on in junior high and middle schools. Some of the principals in this sample indicated that both professors and practitioners need to know more about the philosophy and purposes of the junior high and middle school.

The results of this survey implicitly condemn not the principals surveyed, but the lack of professional support and preparation they have received.

Bondi, Joseph C., and Tocco, Thomas S. "The Nature of the Transescent as It Affects Middle School Program Evaluation." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association annual meeting, Chicago, April 1974. 7 pages. ED 094 462.

The characteristics of the "transescent" student place certain demands on the education system, as Bondi and Tocco point out. "Transescent" students are those who fall into the 10-to-14-years-old category; they are those students in between childhood and adolescence.

These authors point out that part of the rationale for the middle school lies in the increasingly earlier development of these children. Much of the research indicates that "the onset of puberty is occurring earlier in today's youth than in past generations."

Bondi and Tocco emphasize that "the 'typical child' does not exist," especially in this age group, and that in order to meet the needs of the diverse student population, the middle school must provide individualized learning. Since "the gap between the good student and the poor student continually widens" for the 10-to-14 age group, Bondi and Tocco state that "chronological age should be of the least importance and each child should be allowed to travel toward his goal at his own rate of educational growth."

Such factors as these must be acknowledged in the evaluation of a middle school's program, these authors maintain. Public support for the program is in part contingent on how well that program answers the unique needs of transescent students.

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EA 007521

Canadian Teachers' Federation. ***Junior High and Middle Schools. Bibliographies in Education, No. 50.*** Ottawa, Ontario: 1975. 30 pages. ED 105 607.

Compiled from a variety of sources, including the ***Canadian Education Index***, the ***British Education Index***, and ***Research Studies in Education***, as well as the ERIC journal and document indexes, this bibliography includes materials on all aspects of intermediate education—its philosophy, students, teachers, and administrators. The 331 entries were drawn from education indexes for the three years prior to 1975. Books, articles, and theses are included.

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Coppock, Nan. ***Middle Schools.*** NAESP School Leadership Digest Series, Number 2. ERIC/CEM Research Analysis Series, Number 4. Washington, D.C., and Eugene: National Association of Elementary School Principals; and ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1974. 47 pages. ED 091 801.

Noting that the development of the middle school "is one of the major educational innovations of the past two decades," Coppock traces its historical antecedents back to the emergence of the concept of adolescence and the development of junior high school education. She outlines the philosophy of middle school education, pointing out that its major tenet is "the recognition that these [transescent] students vary widely in their stages of physical, cognitive, and affective development." Although she contrasts the middle school and the junior high, she concludes that educators have devoted too much time to defining the differences between the two kinds of schools.

The staff of the middle school, especially its teachers, is, according to several researchers, the most important aspect of middle school education. Coppock emphasizes the importance of special training for teachers, principals, and counselors to enable them to effectively carry out the middle school philosophy of individualization.

Order copies from National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. $2.50.
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Dettre, John R. "The Middle School Should Be a Separate and Equal Entity." ***Clearing House,*** 48, 1 (September 1973), pp. 19-25. EJ 083 896.

"Until the middle level achieves parity legally and within the profession all the curricular and instructional ideas regarding youngsters in the middle years will go for naught." Dettre states his argument for equality of middle education forcefully and carefully. He points out that not only junior high but also the newer middle school education are doomed to ineffectuality because intermediate education has never received the kind of official sanction and professional recognition that elementary and secondary education have received.

The origins of this neglect lie in the dichotomous attitude toward education and toward students themselves that has characterized American thinking across the decades. First, according to Dettre, there has traditionally existed a split between higher (college) education and "common school education." Secondary education came to be regarded as college preparation. Elementary education was associated with education for

the masses. Secondly, students have traditionally been regarded as either "younger" or "older." No allowance was made for the transition from young to old.

To rectify the damage done by these overly simple approaches to education and student development, Dettre recommends first that middle education be granted "the legal and official recognition of a three-level system." And second, the profession, as well as federal, state, and local education agencies, must recognize and support this third level of education.

Doob, Heather Sidor. ***Summary of Research on Middle Schools. Research Brief.*** Washington, D.C.: Educational Research Service, 1975. 40 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

The research on middle school education is far from complete, but on the whole, according to this ERS Research Brief, "the studies . . . do not strongly support the claims of middle school advocates or critics." Nineteen studies summarized in this publication compare middle schools with conventional schools serving 10-to-14-year-old students. Whereas the results are mixed, they point to little difference between middle schools and traditional schools in administration, curriculum, staffing, and facilities.

The authors note that "while existing research does not strongly support the argument that the middle school has realized its full potential, neither does it clearly indicate that the middle school is patently inferior to other more traditional types of schools." Such a conclusion can hardly please middle school advocates. But it does suggest that the gap between middle school education theory and actual practice could be the source of the mixed results.

Order copies from Educational Research Service, Inc., 1815 North Fort Meyer Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22209. $6.00, payment must accompany orders of less than $10.00.

Friesen, David. "The Middle School: An Institution in Search of an Identity." ***Education Canada,*** 14, 3 (September 1974), pp. 4-9. EJ 103 559.

"Thus far educators have not found a satisfactory way to organize public education. . . . it is not clear where elementary ends and secondary begins." Friesen begins by advising his Canadian readers to "take a critical look" at the middle school concept before instituting it in Canadian schools, as many school districts have already done in America. The research on the effectiveness of the middle school is generally inconclusive, as he points out.

Part of the reason for this lack of evidence lies in the nature of the goals of the middle school. Such goals as development of self-concept, "exploring," and "humanizing" are the bases of middle school education. But such "principles" are not easily measured by scientific criteria. While Friesen does not criticize these principles, he does point out that it is difficult to achieve a direct correlation between such theory and its implementation. Educators cannot yet agree on a plan of organization for the middle school that is conducive to the development of its goals.

This article is a thoughtful critique of the concepts underlying the middle school. Friesen's point that more careful attention must be directed to the practical implementation of the theory is well made.

Garvelink, Roger H. "The Anatomy of a Good Middle School." ***Clearing House,*** 48, 2 (October 1973), pp. 100-102. EJ 087 248.

According to Garvelink, Abbott Middle School in West Bloomfield, Michigan, is the epitome of what a middle school should be. Garvelink, assistant superintendent for instruction for the West Bloomfield schools, states that everyone involved in this middle school program is happy with it—students (absenteeism is down), teachers, and administrators.

The Abbott program incorporates a wide variety of course offerings, ranging from traditional academic subjects to "minicourses." The directors of this program "capitalize on the natural tendencies of adolescents not to be interested in things for long periods of time." Hence, courses are taught on alternating days. Time scheduling is flexible, and rotating teaching teams ensure that every teacher in the school will instruct every student at some time during the year. Garvelink points out that such a teaching arrangement is feasible only in a school with small enrollment (approximately 500).

This article offers an interesting glimpse into the workings of a school modeled closely on the philosophy of middle school education. It is perhaps regrettable that Garvelink paints such a rosy picture. The reader might benefit more by knowing some of the difficulties encountered, as well as solutions generated, in carrying out such a program.

Kagan, Jerome. "A Conception of Early Adolescence." ***National Elementary Principal,*** 51, 3 (November 1971), pp. 26-35. EJ 047 007.

Kagan, author of several books on human development, takes a social scientist's look at the "psychological stage called early adolescence"—the stage that provides the fundamental rationale for middle school education. Noting that Western culture tends to see change in terms of discrete units, Kagan states that the conceptualization of early adolescence as a developmental stage is perfectly in keeping with Western psychology. It offers a valuable way of formulating the interrelation between biological development and psychosocial development.

Kagan emphasizes the importance of external experience as the means of triggering normal psychological growth, especially in the early years of puberty. Obviously, the education system is in large part responsible for providing the "proper inducing experiences" necessary to normal development. The onset of puberty brings about changes in "cognitive competence." The pubescent child acquires "the disposition to examine the logic and consistency of his existing beliefs." This change in cognitive ability means that the education system must respond to its demands.

Kagan's article is well written and thoroughly researched. It is an articulate statement of the developmental principles on which middle school education is predicated.

Leeper, Robert R., editor. ***Middle School in the Making. Readings from "Educational Leadership".*** Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1974. 135 pages. ED 100 001.

The middle school as a bridge between childhood and adolescence is the focus of this collection of articles. The emphasis of middle school education on the transitional years fulfills the original intent of this movement, according to William M. Alexander, author of the introduction. Alexander estimates that approximately 4,000 middle schools were in operation in 1974, though he points out that no comprehensive survey has been conducted since 1968.

The articles in this volume deal with middle school students and teachers, curriculum, and the philosophy and rationale behind the middle school movement. One particularly interesting article reviews the research on middle school education, pointing out that no systematic approach to evaluation of middle schools exists.

Most of the 32 articles in this collection were reprinted from the December 1973 issue of ***Educational Leadership.*** Four articles, including the review of the research, are original contributions.

Order copies from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1701 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006. Stock No. 611-74024. $5.00.
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McGlasson, Maurice. ***The Middle School: Whence? What? Whither? Fastback Series, No. 22.*** Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1973. 42 pages. ED 085 897.

In this well-written and concise paper, McGlasson surveys the functions and purposes of junior high and middle school education. Reviewing the history of both the junior high movement, which may be dated from the turn of the century, and the middle school movement, which emerged in the early 1960s, he concludes that in practice the two kinds of schools are often much alike. Although the middle school, unlike the junior high, frequently includes the sixth (and sometimes the

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Research reports are announced in Resources in Education (RIE), available in many libraries and by subscription for $42.70 a year from the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Journal articles are announced in Current Index to Journals in Education. CIJE is also available in many libraries and can be ordered for $50 a year from Macmillan Information, 216R Brown Street, Riverside, New Jersey 08075.

Besides processing documents and journal articles, the Clearinghouse prepares bibliographies, literature reviews, monographs, and other interpretive research studies on topics in its educational area.

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fifth) grade, both types of intermediate schools share many of the same functions and perform those functions in a very similar manner.

McGlasson believes that the recent middle school movement has brought about a much-needed reexamination of intermediate education. Even though little change is wrought in "organizational pattern," middle level education "will profit from this study and concern."

This author does not maintain that there are *no* distinctions between junior high and middle school education. The open space concepts employed in middle schools, for example, serve to set them apart from the more traditional junior highs.

Order copies from Phi Delta Kappa, 8th and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Individual ***Fastback*** $0.50 prepaid, set of six $2.00.

Mullen, David J., editor. ***The Middle School. A Monograph.*** Athens: Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals, 1972. 92 pages. ED 075 953.

The purpose of this collection of papers is to give educators "the background and understanding about 'Middle School Programs' which will help them to act as a constructive force" in program development. Mullen, the editor of this volume, points out that many districts have been "jumping on the 'Middle School Bandwagon'," adopting the trappings of middle school education without the substance. He warns educators against "hoodwinking the public" by making false claims about middle school programs that really only perpetuate the status quo.

The five articles in this collection deal with middle school philosophy, history and development, planning, facilities, and exploitation of the "educational promise" of the middle school.

Although this publication is geared specifically to elementary principals, its articles are of interest to all educators involved in middle school education.

Order copies from David J. Mullen, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601. $2.00, checks payable to Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $4.43. Specify ED number.

Richardson, Joe A. "The Middle School: Pitfalls and Possibilities." Paper presented at American Association of School Administrators annual convention, Atlantic City, February 1972. 8 pages. ED 064 756.

The major problem encountered in trying to provide good middle school education has revolved around forming a teaching staff adequately acquainted with and interested in the unique characteristics of the middle school student, according to Richardson. Noting that "it seems difficult for many teachers to capitalize on the enthusiasm and openness of these children," he points out that it is frequently difficult to organize a staff of teachers "who truly understand and appreciate children of this age group." Another difficulty that frequently arises is how to provide educational continuity while preserving the individualization so necessary in middle school education.

The Winnetka, Illinois, Middle School Campus was designed to answer both of these problems. The campus consists of two schools, the first containing the fifth and sixth grades, and the second housing the seventh and eighth. Teachers at these schools must take a graduate level course, offered through Northwestern University, on individualized instruction. The course deals with both the philosophy of individualization and its practical implementation. Continuity in curriculum and educational experience is achieved through the close relation between the two schools. They are both administered by the same principal, with assistant principals in charge of each school.

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